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ZIGZAG

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ISSUE

WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE

THE ANGELIC UPSTARTS' NEW ALBUM



ANGELIC UPSTARTS

Includes the single
WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE
Also available on cassette



ZIGZAG 100

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YES, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE'VE NOW BEEN ONE HUNDRED ISSUES OF ZIGZAG PUBLISHED! DESPITE INNUMERABLE PITFALLS AND PROBLEMS, DEBTS AND DENTS IN OUR ARMOUR, WHAT STARTED AS THE ORIGINAL FANZINE IN MID-'69 IS STILL GOING, AND NOW PRINTS NEAR ON 30,000 EACH MONTH WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN ALL THE BIG SHOPS. ALL THAT I WANT TO SAY IS THANKX FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND THE CONSTANT FEEDBACK WE GET IN THE FORM OF LETTERS, RECORDS AND REPLIES TO OUR LITTLE BITS OF MAIL FUN (POLL THIS MONTH - VOTE!) THANK ALSO TO THE BANDS FOR THEIR HELP IN MAKING THE MAG NOT SO MUCH A MONTHLY MUSIC PAPER, MORE A PRINTED PEEL SHOW... AND TO OUR DETRACTORS (THIS JEALOUS, FUNLESS SPECIES DO EXIST SOMEWHERE IN THE WOODWORK), WE'RE STILL HERE, WE AIN'T GOING ANYWAY, SO UP YOURS!

TO CELEBRATE WE'RE HAVING A PARTY ON MARCH 31, WHICH IS WHERE THIS ISH WILL FIRST BE OUT (HELD, IF YOU'RE AT THE PARTY, I'M AT THE BAR - IT'S LAGER). FULL REPORT NEXT MONTH.

MEANWHILE, THIS MONTH WE'VE GOT A LOT OF BANDS WHO, AS WE GO TO PRESS, HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN DONE BEFORE BUT WE'RE SURE YOU'LL BE HEARING MORE OF... GUNS FOR HIRE, MAIN POINTS AGAIN, GERMANY'S 'PLAN', THE SPIDERS, CRISIS, PINPOINT, BEAST, THE NEWTOWN NEUROTICS, THE HEAT AND BASEMENT FIVE. WE'VE PRINTED SOME OF YOUR TOP 20's (MORE NEXT MONTH) AND THERE'S ALSO STUFF ON THE ONLY ONES (HOT NEW LP), ATHLETICO SPIZZ '80, WHIRLWIND AND KILLING JOKE, THE LAST TWO WHO SHOULD BE MAKING THE PARTY GO WITH A BANG. THERE'S ALSO A BUNCH OF REVIEWS (THE NEW SUICIDE LP - PHEW!), WALTERS AND A LOOK AT THE LIVERPOOL SCENE, THROUGH NOT-SO-ROSE-COLOURED GLASSES AS YOU'VE COME TO EXPECT. 60 PAGES AS WELL.

RIGHT, MUST GO AND GET ON WITH THE REST OF THE MAG. DON'T FORGET TO VOTE IN THE POLL (COS IT'S YOUR VOTES THAT COUNT, FRIENDS). SEE YA...

Kris XXXX



NUMBER ONE !



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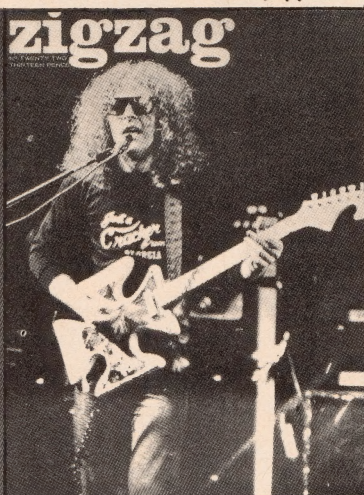
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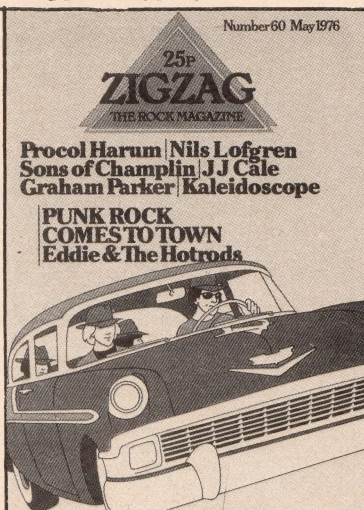
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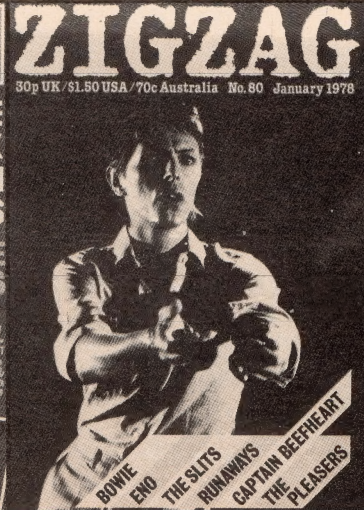
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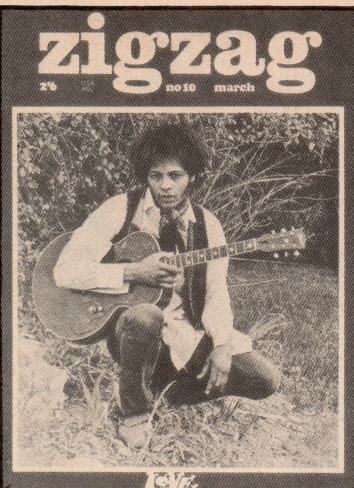
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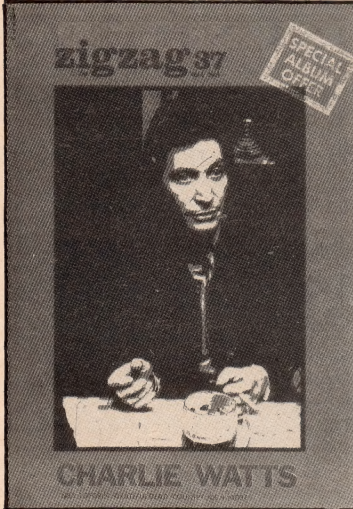
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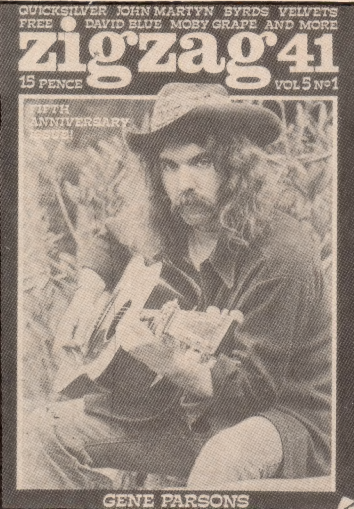
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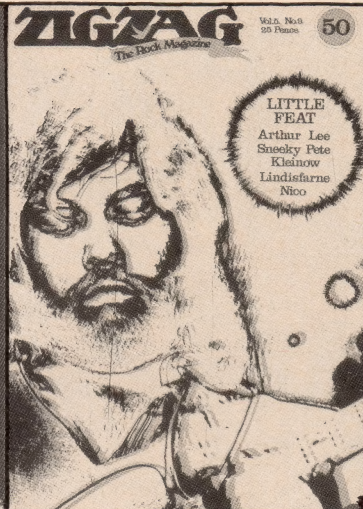
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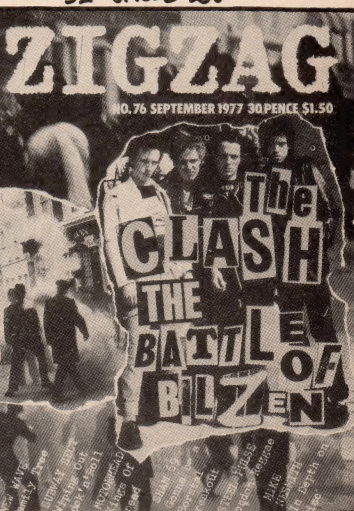
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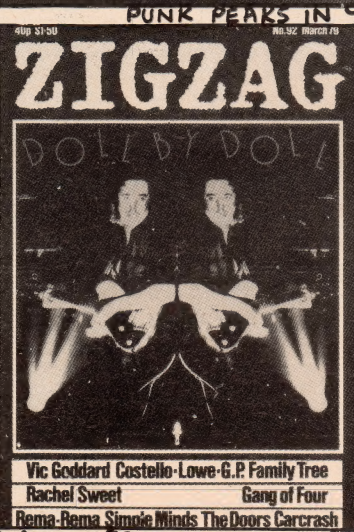
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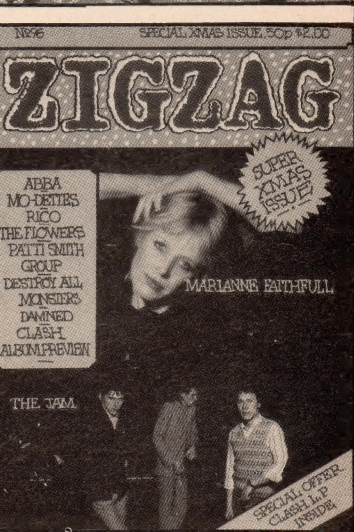
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"PEOPLE love reggae music except the way that its being presented sleeve-wise and stage-wise, played musically, and the lyrics — it's always being narrowed down to, like, nothing. Nil. Second-rate more or less. You've got your pile of reggae and your pile of rock and you're proud of your pile of rock! You take out the reggae albums to show, 'look, I'm into it and I do know what's going on but I'm not really raving about it because it ain't nothing new.' If they get that one new thing coming, like Bob Marley — they went overboard and brought him up because he was that one change at that time. They expected a few more but there weren't any and the music just went back down again, because there was no-one else doing anything.

"Our thing, when you hear the rock, you can't say that's new to play rock but it's not rock you can say is like Led Zepellin, it's *our* rock. The reggae is a different form of reggae too. It's *our* reggae. It's what will set us apart from any other band, it's that one thing which will make us big, because we will be big. It's that one thing — we're us!" — Dennis Morris, singer, Basement Five.

Rock to this brand new beat. Basement Five are Dennis Morris (vocals), Leo (bass), JR (guitar) and T (drums). Four geezers trying to hack a badly-needed path through the preconceptions and fences surrounding reggae and rock.

They play both. The former, fine. That's what black musicians are supposed to play when they bust out and form bands from the London ghetto. ROCK? Indeed that could cause some raised eyebrows in Ladbroke Grove and Brixton. But that's the idea.

Leo: "They're scared. Black people have always been told what to do. They follow, they don't try to do something. 'Don't go over there, man, you can't. What's life? You'll never know what life is cos someone's always telling you what to do. Try something new!'"

Basement Five have the strength and audacity to give Reggae a much-needed shakeup, and smash right through the other side to Rock's plodding kneecaps too. God knows I love reggae but I just get fed up with the same old rhythms always popping up, same dub-routine and welter of stereotyped songs about Jah or lovers rock. Originators like Spear and Marley stand, many others melt into repetitive anonymity and the ones really pushing out boundaries are people like Linton Kwesi Johnson. Basement Five take the music to pieces and put it back together in fresh, lively form. Their first single, likely to be released in the near future by Island Records, will probably be "Silicone Chip". It boasts one of the quintessential Punk rock-riffs, played relentlessly and fuzzily by JR (no relation) and bolstered up with Leo's floor-thudding bass. A compulsively danceable reggae swing is injected via T's drums, while Dennis' voice resembles a curious mix of Linton and Lydon in the way he intones words over hypnotic music, but ultimately D. Morris is the only one at home.

I got my first shot of B.5 courtesy Island Press Officer Rob Partridge and a cassette player (says a lot for the man, and the band, that he's playing tracks and enthusing about them before they're even on the label!) It was a brace of demos, recorded in four days over Christmas when Basement Five in this form had only really been together two weeks. They'd been in Portugal sorting

BASEMENT FIVE

out music for about six months before but then the singer had been Don Letts. This lineup did the Rainbow with PIL. He was more at home making films so in came Mr. Dennis Morris, also noted for work behind the lens. Dennis gave up a lucrative career in photography — you must have seen his PIL, Faithfull and LKJ album sleeves, not to mention numerous pix in the Rock Press — to join the Five, and don't regret it at all.

I heard the tape again round his gaff above Basing Street studios in Notting Hill. We sat in the smokey dark and once more I was quite stunned by the startling sound filling the room. "Silicone Chip" is the most overt "rocker" on the tape. "New Breed" and "Stage Fright" lean more to Rockers but you never heard Rockers like this. The same reassembling, trampling of accepted music forms. You dance to the beat, Dennis intones, the new music rolls on and you wonder what they'll turn up with live experience and a bit more studio time!

The group sit round me. Dennis does most of the talking. Leo laughs a lot, JR throws in the odd quiet-spoken but concise view and T nods or laughs, but then he is furthest down the sofa. Dennis starts with a bit of background:

"The guys came back from Portugal and we met. This was s'posed to happen ages ago but never did because of different involvements and everybody doing different things — wasn't the right time. It just seems to have worked out the right time now. We talked about musical ideas and it clicked. Next stage was to see if we could work together, so we took off for two weeks out in the country and everything was written there. All of a sudden we all had the same ideas, sang the same lines. It's really important to a band. We've got the same ideas now in the same way. It's real easy because that's what the music's about."

Leo: "That's the big drawback with people, they can't communicate but once you do, it's great."

The music seems very open-ended, not about one particular type of music.

Dennis: "Well, music has no barriers. I always find it strange for black bands just to play reggae and white bands just to play rock. More white bands are starting to check out reggae and play it, they've more or less got it together, but black bands have always stuck to what they call roots. That's what has really narrowed it down. We were born in Jamaica but we live here. We're Englishmen, so what we do is what's happening in England, what we feel. We don't really know what's happening in Jamaica because we don't live there."

"The song 'Immigration' affects loads of people — black people, white, everybody where you're separated. The only way you get to see each other is through the post. Again, with our songs, it's not aimed at one particular person. You listen to it and you can see your life, something which affects your mate or something like that. You and I can get into it, it's right across the board."

What about "New Breed"?

Dennis: "'New Breed' is about half-casts. It's talking about something I've experienced in the East End where I come from. Over there is depression but people are firmly together, because they're in the same ship. You find in places like Chelsea that people mix but they don't really mingle together that much. It's just a social thing, whereas in

PIC: DENNIS MORRIS



the East End — not just there, anywhere, Liverpool . . . nobody's any better off than anyone else. You can't say it's the blacks who are putting you out of work because you know it's not, so you mingle properly as people. The new race it's a half-cast race . . ."

'Stage Fright'?

Leo: "It's more or less what happens to everybody who steps in front of people."

Dennis: "Everybody's trying to psych everybody out. The band's trying to psych the audience, the audience is trying to psych the band. Sometimes the audience win."

Down to business. So you disapprove of a lot of the reggae?

Dennis: "They seem to be scared of actually projecting themselves onstage. You see a reggae band onstage and you can't tell the difference from another band. They don't wanna project anything, it narrows it down."

"Stage Fright again," chips in Leo.

So you're planning a stage act?

Dennis: "Oh yeah. We got all that together. Appearance. When you see it you'll realise. It's not costumes or anything. When you first see it you think it looks a bit odd, then you realise it's something that everybody wears, really universal, every country in the world . . . it's as surprise."

The mind boggles but the secret will be out by the time you read this as they've done the Clarendon and our Zigzag party by now.

"When we go onstage they're going to think it's a bit funny. When we play the first tune it's gonna surprise them even more. They're gonna expect rockers or something. They're gonna get a shock."

None of the same old ridims then?

Dennis: "It's depressing. You get a really good album and everybody else does it. You end up with six albums with the same rhythm! It's always the same guys, that's why they all sound the same. Even over here it's getting like that, which stagnates the music, nothing fresh."

JR: "They latched on to the Jamaican identities and thought that's what they should do. Didn't even try to change it or improve it, just copy it completely."

You're mixing up ridims with rock and things . . .

Dennis: "Yeah, there's loads of rhythms we're using, it's very flexible, 'cept the way it was coming out of Jamaica it never sounded flexible. That's why the music never became universal quicker. Never sounded like it could be any other way at all, just sounded like this was the way you must play it. No-one wanted to touch it. Reggae could have taken off years ago had it had more changes. Marley came up with a sound and words and then everybody got that sound and that ideology and you had twenty Bob Marleys. In any business there's only room for one and that's the originator. After that everybody else is a cheap copy."

"People are waiting for that kind of change in Reggae Music or that kind of change in a black band. Guys like Spear are alright but they can never be big, man. The way I see it, it is having your music commercial. When I say commercial I mean universal with everybody into it. Music is to be enjoyed, not just by a small minority but by everyone. For me, if he's doing music, no matter what his religion, he has to entertain, because that's what music is, entertainment. You



can never change people's thoughts totally by music, you can make them aware of it, but you can never change it. It's another way of communication, but it's a good way of entertaining and bringing people together. When they pay their two quid they don't wanna go and see some preacher on stage.

"Our attitude towards the whole thing isn't a superstar thing. It's more or less going back to basics, having a good time. We don't just stand around onstage — all hell breaks loose! I think that's what's basically been missing in music. PiL are great but you can't really enjoy it, it's more like an art school type of thing. That's why bands like Selector take off, because kids can really enjoy themselves."

You've been sort of compared with PiL.

"I don't see that though, can you?"

If you're talking about smashing musical taboos, yeah. Also PiL have taken similar ingredients from black music — dancing rhythms (not actual rhythms) and spaces

Dennis replies that what makes PiL is their individuality, another similarity — "loads of people try to copy PiL but they can't. It's coming out of their heads."

I ask if there's any other bands they like or share an empathy with.

Quick as a flash Leo leaps in — "Selector cos I like the chick. Make sure you put that in," he leers.

Okay . . . Dennis?

"The only person I admire in black music, apart from Marley, is Linton. To me he's the only one that's done anything. What he did was really brave. As a poet . . . the idea to do that was totally fresh."

The group agree that the ska bands are "alright, but nothing new, just reworking things". But Dennis can see the day when A&R men switch their cheque-book eyes from Two-tone clones to outfits with new approaches of Basement Five.

"There are a few other bands, not doing what we're doing, but trying new things, so what will happen is the record companies will offer deals to bands which are close to us, which could be a

white band. We're not into black-white categories, we're dealing with music. If we get all white kids I don't care, as long as they enjoy it . . .

"Most of the music coming out kind of causes a social barrier between black and white because of the lyrics' attitudes. One of the things I could never understand at first was the way Linton could stand in front of an all-white audience and do a song and slag 'em off — and they'd clap! It was because of the way he did it. He made those kids think."

I wondered what made Dennis throw up his highly successful photographic career for singing (although he says he'll still do work of personal interest, like Linton — "things I'm proud to get the opportunity to do" — and, using delayed action, Basement Five!).

"I always wanted to do this, but I was always into photography. Most people think if you're plumber you should be a plumber. There's loads of people who'd like to do something but, because they're one thing they think they can't be anything else. But it's not, you do what you want to do."

This is a new slant on the boring "Frustrated Rock Stars" jibe often hurled at writers who try a bit of performing. Dennis believes you should be free to move but, in this case, not both at the same time. — "This is what I'm into now."

You must have taken a dive in earnings, Den.

"Yeah . . . we survive. You believe in it, you do it. I had a, really good job and I gave it up, but I never had anything before so to give it up was nothing. I don't think about it."

Dennis Morris is too busy thinking along with Leo, J.R. and T, about Basement Five and the swathe it's shortly gonna cut through predictable music. If you caught them at the Zigzag party you'll probably know what I mean by now. If you didn't, you will.

Kris Needs

SINGLE LOOP ELECTRIC



DERAM

NEWTOWN

NEUROTICS

"IN Harlow," Steve Drewett explains, "You don't get one number to call the Samitans, you get four." The aptly named Newtown Neurotics are a three piece Ramones inspired punk band from Harlow, New Town. Harlow has been described in low life circles as "speed city", because when there's nothing to do and nowhere to go those little blue pills come in very handy on a weekend trip to London. Harlow — the valley of the dolls?

The Newtown Neurotics are: Steve Drewett — a genuine Ramones freak whose fanaticism led to the ultimate accolade, he's captured forever alongside his heroes in the inner-sleeve photos to the immaculate "It's Alive" classic — guitar / vocals, Colin Masters (who occasionally reminds me of a teeny bop version of Paul Simon) bass and Tigg "I'm not as intelligent as I look" Barber on drums. Despite such musical luminaries as Stephanie De Sykes, Dr. Feelgood's John Mayo and one of the Blockheads, the Newtown Neurotics are the first real rock 'n' roll band to emerge from the concrete restrictions of Harlow. Consequently the Newtown Neurotics play nervous rock, remember that.

Steve Drewett first entertained ideas of forming a group after seeing practically everyone else (you know who I mean) playing in the halcyon daze of '76 and '77. Steve borrowed Colin Masters, Harlow friend and fellow neurotic, what he describes as "a bit of a bass" and they set to work rehearsing and playing whenever and whatever they could. Drummer Tig Barber, an ex-ice cream salesman, was recruited after he refused to pay them for a gig he had promoted at a local village hall in Essex and the Newtown Neurotics were born.

Steve: "We got a 50-50 response of hate and love for the name, so after that type of reaction we decided to keep it. Because even if you hate the name you'll remember it. It's not just a name though, it is what it says — it totally expresses the town we come from. We met each other and it gelled because we've all got one thing in common, we are neurotic . . . Neurotics pick neurotic friends."

I first saw the Newtown Neurotics at that tacky South London toilet Mayhem. After several pretentious outfits the Newtown Neurotics provided an exhilarating, noisy relief, three minute explosions such as "Hypocrite", "Fools", "When The Oil Runs Out" and their newtown anthem "Oh No" were directed at the bored Battersea audience in quick succession. Their spirited "carbon copy" of "Blitzkrieg Bop" loses none of the basic Ramones excitement in translation, and the inclusion of two

extended "reggae" numbers in their stage repertoire ("You Said No" and "Bored Policemen") appear to owe much to The Clash's "Police And Thieves" or SLF's "Johnny Was", though the band claim to be influenced by Linton Kwesi Johnson.

Since then they have recorded and released their debut single, "Hypocrite" / "You Said No", on their own No Wonder label (ironically titled after being turned down by Small Wonder) and played a string of dates in Belgium under heavy duty riot conditions. What's that all about?

Drewett: "We went to RTB, which is the main French speaking radio station in Brussels, to do an interview. It was a really wierd situation, we were saying 'This is the plan for today. We'll go to RTB to do the interview, then we'll go home, have some tea and then we'll go to the riot. The riot starts at six o'clock.' All through the day we were going 'Look, come on, hurry up, we'd better get home, have something to eat or else we won't get any food in before the riot starts.' We finished the interview and arrived at the place where the riot was supposed to take place, and — sure enough — it started at exactly six o'clock. And there was this f---ing riot."

The reason for all this Belgium flag burning, molotov cocktail throwing and rioting was that all live rock concerts were banned by order of the mayor of Brussels. Naturally the younger residents of Brussels took exception. Belgium has a fascist government with a thin facade of democracy and the mayor in question is a typically ancient blue meanie. The Newtown Neurotics were all set to play one of the city's halls, but the promoter — journalist Daniel De Brucker — was arrested by riot police. After he protested that it was undemocratic to ban what, after all, only amounted to a concert, the mayor realised his predicament, released De Brucker and declared the gig legal. A victorious announcement was relayed over RTB and, since it was the only rock 'n' roll concert that day in Brussels youths descended on the hall to view the Newtown Neurotics in full flight. Since that gig the climate for live rock music has changed for the better and the band are now regarded in Brussels as "a bit of a mini legend", as Drewett puts it. A full Belgium tour has been pencilled in for May.

The Newtown Neurotics possess a cynical penchant for playing gigs that perhaps not many groups would attempt, talent competitions, discos, village halls, Darby and Joan dances and the like. Drewett: "We like to do certain things, whenever we can, unusually. Every now and then we like to throw people off. So, that's why we enjoyed the idea of going over to Belgium



with a riot situation going on — something different every time. We once played a talent competition, just for a laugh, with magicians, would-be comedians and old ladies getting up to sing, that sort of thing. Slap bang in the middle, apart from the folk guitarist, was us. They had to warn everyone before we went on that it might disturb them and that it might be a bit loud. We played and all the old ladies were putting their handbags up to their ears.

One of the judge's comments was 'f . . . ing row'. I loved that. I've still got it, I'll probably have it framed." In line with their unusual policy a date has been proposed to play Wormwood Scrubs in the near future.

Despite apathy from the major labels and finding it easier to get a gig in Brussels than Harlow, the Newtown Neurotics soldier on. Their second No Wonder release should be 'When The Oil Runs Out' — a

more topical song you couldn't hope to hear — and Dingwalls has been scheduled for early April. Colin Masters' bass carries the message 'Illegitimi non carborundum', which loosely translated means "Don't let the bastards grind you down". Drewett: "Just achieving each bit we do makes me feel more like carrying on with life." Nervous rock, remember that.

Peter Coyne

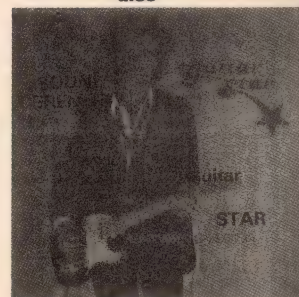
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THE country is rapidly being taken over by Spiders. First there was The Spiders from Mars, now there's a Dutch band called Spiderz, a pub rock band called Spider, a Liverpool band called The Spiders and an Irish combo of Spiders. This article is about The Spiders, but it's not about any of the aforementioned. Confused? Well, read on and all will be revealed.

The Spiders in this particular case are a London-based band comprising of four girls and a bloke on drums. They play the kind of garageband pop-music that bands such as Holly & the Italians and the Mo-Dettes do so well. They are pretty new to the scene as a unit, but three have notorious past histories with other bands.

Dee Hurley (guitarist) and Lynne 'Pearl' Easton (bassist) formed The Spiders after a short stint together in the ill-fated 'Pearl-Harbour' (a former tip-for-the-top by Robin Banks in Zigzag). They had both previously played together in the legendary London punk outfit 'Mothers Pride', which collapsed when one of the members had a baby.

"We had some great laughs in Mothers Pride", says Dee in the comforts of her South London flat after holding a party there the night before. The place is a shambles and Dee has a hangover, but agrees to chat a little about her musical career. Also in evidence is the latest member to join the band; the cute looking ivory-tinkler from Leeds, Marsi Web.

"I remember one night with Mothers Pride when Lynne forgot to turn her bass on at the Vortex and she just stood there wondering why no sound was coming out. The manager, Mark Mason, had to go on stage and switch it on for her.

Mind you, we were all as bad as each other. The original idea was to get the old Mothers Pride members back together again, but then we found Debbie, our singer", says Dee.

It seems that Debbie Sanders, the excellent 16-year-old girl vocalist who epitomises the fun attitude of the band, turned up to audition for the band and both Dee and Lynne were amazed that they had actually found someone who could sing any kind of music. "She was great."

So all that was needed then was a drummer and a girl was found to fit the original all female line up, but she never lasted long and when the band was given the chance to make its debut at Vespas in London, alongside two mod bands, they hastily recruited a male drummer. As it turned out, the gig was a disaster due to the inadequacy of the drummer. Hostile chants of "Get that f---ing wanker offstage" saw the drummer leave the stage and the Spiders for good. Halfway through the gig, a young bloke called Rob Egan got on stage and helped out on the skin-bashing. After the gig he was asked to join as a permanent member. Rob had previously played with a few little known London bands as well as working with Steve Strange on the notorious single by the Moors Murderers. A venture he obviously doesn't want to talk too much about.

The four-piece Spiders continued to play the London gig circuit, oblivious to the fact that a few bands of the same name were also operating. "I suppose we might have to change our name later on to the London Spiders or something. We won't drop the name altogether, though, cos we've built up a following now," says Dee.

With the band's past very much in the punk scene and their clothes fashion very mod / two-tone it would seem that The Spiders attract a cross section of punks and mods, but so far (surprisingly!) there hasn't been any large amounts of trouble and the band were very fortunate to have to miss out on supporting The UK Subs at the Music Machine due to Dee having to be hospitalized. It would have been interesting to see how a Subs crowd would react to a band of zany

girls, not forgetting Rob on drums. "He looks like a girl, anyway", says Dee rather unkindly.

"We had to miss out on a gig that Capital Radio were promoting for all-girl bends, when they discovered we had a male drummer, but we don't mind because it's hard to get a good girl drummer and Rob is a good drummer."

Although the band have only been around a short time they are lucky enough to have arrived when a lot of females are beginning to get noticed and record deals are in the offing. Bands like the Mo-dettes, Bodysnatchers and Dolly Mixture all have deals and The Spiders will join them when they release their first 45 later this year. They have already recorded their version of sixties classic, 'Mony Mony' as the A side and an old Mothers Pride number called 'Product of today' will probably be the B side. Another original song written by Dee called 'You're the sort of boy' is already being planned as a follow-up single.

Dee writes most of the material, which includes songs like "Onward christian hypocrites", "In the bleak mid winter" and "Drawing the curtains". Apart from 'Mony Mony', the band also play The Hollies' "Look through any window" and a Dave Clark Five B side called, "I know you". These numbers help to create a sixties 'pop' feel and singer, Debbie can handle an audience with ease. She used to play some keyboards on stage, but has given up that role to concentrate on being the focal point. Marsi, a good friend of Leeds all-girl band The Straits agreed to join after witnessing a couple of gigs that The Spiders did with The Nips.

The band seem very happy with the current line-up and already have a head start in so far as they have the Mothers Pride followers as well as their newer fans. They still have to go some way to be in the class of, say, The Mo-dettes, but are a relatively new band and there is plenty of time to develop. They may even have a hit on their hands with 'Mony Mony'. Then we'll see which band of Spiders are the most important.

Alan Anger

CARTOONS BY DEE HURLEY



GUNS FOR HIRE

(L-R)- MIKE HERBAGE, VAUGHN TOULOUSE, TONY LORDAN, MIKE HASLER

FOR most of last summer Guns For Hire were the best band in the world, the real killing joke as they wound up the music biz with just 500 badges and bags of suss. They were the band you'd get if you combined the spirit behind The Clash with the style of The Jam and added the requisite guts that go with all the best bands. The story goes like this:

Mod was a laugh and those who laughed loudest were the kids who started it and could see beyond The Bridge House to its inevitable end. For a while The Cambridge and The Wellington were good places to hang out but mod was dying by the time the world knew it existed. Few of the bands survived the hype but the spirit of the early mod boom and the experience of punk fired the imagination of Vaughn Toulouse, well known face about town, who set about creating the perfect rock band. He roped in a few of his mates for this ambitious project and the first lineup of Guns For Hire settled down as Vaughn, Bob Bethnal (Green), Gary Foghorn Crowley, Tony London and a geezer, called Paul on drums.

These were The Guns finest days, ligg-ing around town on the back of a non-existent band. Make no mistake, the idea of becoming a proper band was still a germ in Vaughn's turbulent brain, booze

and chaos were still the order of the day as Virgin's shop staff found at their party. In September, 3 months after the fateful Marquee night when The Guns were conceived, the first batch of badges were delivered. Featuring the ubiquitous 2-Tone geezer packing a pistol, the badge was responsible for making The Guns a full scale cult. When you consider that there were no more than ten of us in the know and the badge sold in excess of 2,000 you might begin to twig that something was going on. Aided by cryptic mentions in T-Zers and Sounds the band began to attract a certain interest as 2-Tonemania swept the land. People were convinced that they were an authentic 2-Tone band and I well remember pissing myself at Aylesbury one evening as some bozo described their gig of the previous night. I thought this was it but better was to come.

The following Sunday there was a Guns For Hire outing to The Venue to see The Teenbeats. During the gig Ginge (Spizz roadie and acting Guns manager) was approached by one of EMI's ever-on-the-ball A&R men who offered The Guns lodgings in a studio, all expenses paid until they came up with a single shaped thing. Laugh? We thought our trousers would never dry.

It was after this ridiculous incident that

the idea of a proper band began to rear its head and seemingly overnight Vaughan turned in a bundle of really catchy, streetwise lyrics. After toying with an all-star pickup band under the name of Vaughan Toulouse and the One Armed Bandits he got on the case and came up with the first all-singing, all-dancing version of Guns For Hire.

Supported by Banshees-promoter Dave Woods the band went into the studio and got together a tape featuring Vaughan's first batch of songs and a devastating rockabilly version of Siouxsie's "Staircase". The band entered the present decade as Vaughan on vocals, Tony on bass, Mike Herbage on guitar and ex-Madness boss John Hasler on the stool. The demos put the band in the same sort of field as The Nips, The Chords and the best of Madness, though don't take that as definitive. At the moment, on the strength of the demos the band is being pursued by several major labels with pens at the ready.

Anyway, that's the history of The Guns and with a single ready ("I'm Gonna Rough My Girlfriend's Boyfriend Up Tonight") they stand on the threshold of success. I can only hope that they're as successful a band as they were a joke.

REMEMBER: GUNS FOR HIRE ...
DON'T HARGUE! Suspect o' Typewriter

A D V E N T U R E S I N

UTOPIA

ROGER POWELL KASIM SULTON JOHN WILCOX

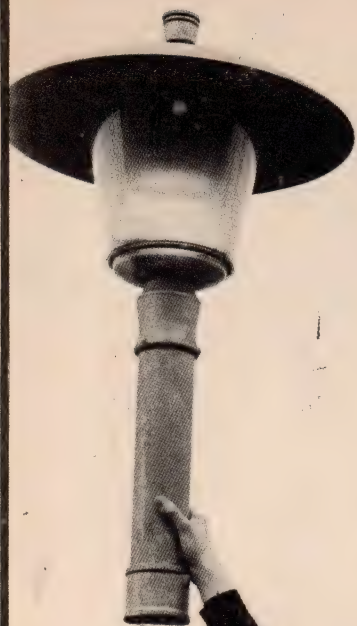
T O D D R U N D G R E N

O U T N O W



ISLAND

ATHLETICO SPIZZ '80



MIKE LAYE

SPIZZ ENERGI have had the distinction of appearing in the *Zigzag* Next Month Box no less than four times on the trot. Blame falls on the head of the writer who gave new meaning to the phrase "it's in the post". In return we gave new depth to the phrase "you're fired!", so no Alan Pride on the masthead (oops!).

You want something done, do it yourself, and that's why I'm sitting in the Barbican boozier over the road from the Spizz-Banshees office surrounded by the full strength of Athletico Spizz '80, this year's name.

I decided to faithfully reproduce the ensuing dialogue minus orders for drinks (half the tape!) cos there were six people talking and what came out was funny and informative.

But first, a recap. You must know how young Spizz first took to the stage and it was 1977 so he became Spizz '77, teamed up with guitarist Pete Petrol, and assaulted crowds with spontaneous abuse, ranting, noises and stark, abrasive tunes. Spizz Oil in '78, Banshee support gigs and the first singles — "6,000 Crazy" and "Cold City".

1979, Spizz Energi and increasing augmentation but the departure of Pete Petrol. Acquired Hiroshima, a drummer, who played his first Spizz gig at Birmingham supporting the scratch Banshees of last autumn. Moroder-flavoured 45, "Soldier Soldier" very impressive. Follow-up, "Where's Captain Kirk?", tops Alternative Chart for weeks and nibbles at the Beeb one.

A new year, a new name: Enter Athletico Spizz '80. Hiroshima's gone and the lineup has solidified — Spizz (vocals), Jim Solar (bass), Mark Coalfield (keyboards), Dave Scott (guitar) and new man C. P. Snare (drums).

After going round the table for voice on-tape identification purposes, we begin:

ZZ: What's the new single called?

Spizz: It's called "No Room" with "Spock's Missing" and "Energy Crisis" on the 'B' side. "Energy Crisis" is taken from a Peel show in March '79.

Jim: That was when the band was drummerless and three-piece. There was me, Mark, and Paul 'Alcoholic' Guest on guitar. We brought him in for extra reinforcements on guitar even though Spizz played guitar on some songs. Paul Guest was brought in just for the session, given a fee and we haven't seen him since!

Spizz: Should be in the shops by mid-April when we come back from Europe. The 'A' side is quite sophisticated, but balanced by the material on the other side.

ZZ: "Soldier Soldier" was near-disco, "Where's Captain Kirk?" was fast and ...

Spizz: Poppy.

ZZ: What about this one?

Dave: It's slower, kind of refined, bit more sophisticated.

Jim: It's a broader sound as well. As you say, with the other two singles it's been a specific type of sound or effect that people have got from those records but with this one I think the appeal will possibly be wider.

Spizz: When you first go in the studio you just wanna let rip with everything and then you start taking it easy and ...

ZZ: Where did you record it?

Spizz: Same place. Berry Street, EC1. Still on 16-track!

ZZ: When you gonna do an LP?

Dave: It's got to be this year cos the whole unit's developed.

Spizz: We never had a stable enough lineup before to do a proper record.

Jim: I think we can safely say there will be an album this year, when we come

back from Europe ...

ZZ: Do you reckon you'll have enough songs? You won't put all the singles on it or anything ...

Dave: Oh no, nothing like that.

Spizz: There might be a remixed version of "Soldier"

Jim: You see when we originally recorded "Soldier" we wanted to do a long version with designs on the 12-inch market, but that didn't get off the ground. We ended up not-quite-the-ideal seven-inch length but a bit too short for a 12-inch.

ZZ: Tempting to do a disco-dub treatment.

Dave: There's a lot of spaces in it, positive gaps.

Jim: That was the first record we did as a band. The studio can be quite a cruel place, and when we first played it exactly as we had been doing it live it sounded a total mess. So what we had to do was strip it right down and just calculate exactly what we were gonna play. It's something we hadn't really done before because we hadn't thought much about it, but we learnt, and when it came to do "Kirk" we had it worked out in advance what we were gonna do, without having to thin anything out too much.

ZZ: "Kirk" crawled into the charts, didn't it?

Spizz: Mm, kissed the backside.

Jim: It got to 78 in the BRMB chart and 60 in the Record Business chart. And it was number one in the *Sounds*' Alternative Chart for seven weeks.

ZZ: Got to number one in the Green Man chart one week.

Spizz: Did it!! Put that in.

ZZ: Um, did you get any feedback from the "Star Trek" team, cos the single was released same day as the film?

Spizz: Well we rang up Kirk's London

agent and said, 'hey, he's come over for ten days, can we do a publicity stunt?' and the agency said 'Yeah! Great idea'. Youth culture heroes meet mass audience TV hero, you know, and they almost got it set up, then CBS found out about it and put dampers on it. They were doing the official soundtrack and didn't want us in any way making money out of their products. We didn't intend to. It was written in May. But they gave free tickets to the Press showing so the band saw the film on the house, as it were, so it made up for it. We were all laughing at the serious parts.

ZZ: Did you think it was a good film?

Spizz: Enjoyable. I was lost at one point. I thought I was viewing the "Enterprise" real, and then I saw this man do a flip, and I thought, "oh no".

ZZ: I heard it was a bit dull.

Dave: There is a bit two-thirds of the way through which takes off into fantasy like "2001" does. But it was overdrawn.

Spizz: They had new decoration. But you do get the feeling of vastness.

ZZ: What's the 'B' side of the next single "Spock's ..."?

Spizz: "Spock's Missing", the sequel before the film. I'm sure they're gonna get wind of it and make a quick scrap movie about "Spock's Missing". It's the first love song I've ever written.

ZZ: How?

Spizz: It's Kirk pining for Spock, who's ... unavailable.

ZZ: This suggests a certain relationship between Kirk and Spock.

Spizz: Well, you see I have heard of books, like fanzines, and certain shops have books which explore the relationship between Kirk and Spock.

Jim: Starship erotica! Some suggest there's something dubious about it.

Spizz: I'm not bogged down by Sci-fi — it's just part of our optimism for the future!

ZZ: Any other new songs come out recently?

Spizz: "New Species". But we stick stuff in all the time. We can do 15 songs ...

Jim: I'd say there were 20 that we're, physically capable of playing at a moment's notice, and I s'pose if we dug into the archives we could bring up another half dozen more that we've discarded.

Spizz: Some we just like to play live only for pure fun's sake, like "Clocks Are Big And Machines Are Heavy".

Dave: Mark's got vaults full of stuff. I've got a library of riffs.

Jim: You see, Mark and I used to play in bands together before we started playing with Spizz. The Thrust Pigeons ... none really got off the ground, with the possible exception of the Ha-Ha Germs. Mark has quite a lot of songs that he wrote then.

ZZ: Are you now officially "Athletico Spizz '80"?

Spizz: It'll be confirmed by the new disc.

ZZ: What prompted this?

Spizz: Well, it's a new decade and the Olympic Games happened to be around at the time and I thought, "Sport's gonna be a feature" ...

Jim: Also we all passed a New Year's resolution to give up smoking and drinking and be fit and healthy and do exercises and stuff to coincide with the new name, but we had a bit of trouble getting that idea off the ground unfortunately.

Spizz: Just like when we started Energi, being healthy and fit and energetic

ZZ: So it's Europe next then?

Jim: Yeah, with the Mo-dettes. Then maybe a tour of Scotland, cos we haven't been there, and a couple of nights at the Marquee perhaps. There's whole areas of the country we haven't been to.

Spizz: We wanna do a summer holiday tour. Just go round the coast near Cornwall, enjoying all the sun and seaside at the same time!

ZZ: Really this is the most serious you've been, isn't it, cos Spizz Oil was pretty ... loose. Now you're making a concentrated effort.

Spizz: Well, Oil was spontaneous and freeform, there was no drumming to tie it down, or anything else for that matter. It affected the audience of lot of nights. If we went over violently it'd make us angry, if they were energetic for us ... we'd be pretty boring actually — instant complacency!

Jim: Nowadays we don't get so influenced by an audience's reaction. Now we can be more disciplined — if the audience is cool I think it makes us play a bit better.

ZZ: First time I saw you was at Birmingham Odeon last September with the Banshees, and it was hardly a riot.

Dave: That was my second gig with the band.

Jim: We'd only met the drummer the day before.

ZZ: What happened there? How did you find CP?

Spizz: He placed himself on the market via *Melody Maker*, put his meat up for sale, and we were looking for a drummer, rang him up, and he amazed us!

Jim: Hiroshima had left to go back to art college. I think he was more of an artist than a drummer, he couldn't decide which to do, so round about January we helped him make his decision, all very agreeable.

That Banshees tour did us a lot of good actually. Dave and Hiroshima had joined at the same time, and a lot of the time we got cool reactions and mopped a bit about being third on the bill but it did us an awful lot of good. We'd do it all again if need be. We've never turned down a gig since.

Spizz: We accepted the Banshees dates and we didn't have a guitarist or a drummer. And we accepted the Rough Trade package tour with Kleenex and the Raincoat without a guitarist.

Jim: This has been the biggest reason why there've been so many lineup changes. Right from the time when Mark and myself started playing with Spizz in January '79, the first six months we were offered gigs on the strength of Spizz Oil really. That's how we were offered the first Peel session I think, and the Kleenex tour and others. We never turned any down. This offer meant recruiting a guitarist and a drummer who might not be totally suitable, but we brought them in anyway because we didn't want to cancel the gig.

ZZ: How do you think you've been treated by the Press?

Jim: It's funny, I think there has been a definite snobbery towards us. It was only about November that the tide began to turn, we felt. For the whole of '79 there seemed to be definite apathy towards us.

ZZ: The success of "Captain Kirk" seems to have changed people's opinions. They don't treat you as a "little novelty" anymore.

Jim: Yeah, now instead of us ringing

round, people ring us for gigs.

Spizz: There've been two years of this general thing. I had got a bit bitter about it.

Jim: We have a very long memory when it comes to the Music Press. We are very much aware of who is on our side and who isn't. We know who's been against us in the past. If there's any change of face, it will be noticed.

Spizz: I've just moved to London from the Midlands. At long last! When I first bumped into Jim and Mark I said, "are you prepared to leave your jobs and go to London if people start hassling?" I was the last to move.

ZZ: What were you doing?

Jim: We had a band and we were both working during the day as well.

Mark: I was living in Selly Park in Birmingham and working as a chef, getting up at five in the morning six mornings a week.

Jim: I worked in an office selling safety pins.

Dave: I was in a band called "Bank of Dresden". I thought up the name ... it was gonna be called "Bank of Boroda", cos there is a Bank of Boroda in London. I was desperately trying to think of a name then I saw this place. Duart, in the band, said, let's call it "Bank of Dresden."

Richard Dudanski played drums. There was also Jane, who's now in the Mo-dettes.

ZZ: How did you join Spizz, Dave?

Dave: Well, I'd had this six month lay off when I'd been doing solo anti-song, anti-band material with various people, and Richard Dudanski was with Pil and I was a bit stuck so half way through September I was working with a film-maker, doing spontaneous mad solo guitar performances to these films, live soundtracks. I heard through Richard about this science fiction festival in Leeds, did this great gig for three minutes after Pil finished ... I was on top in front of this 40 foot film screen and started walking away with me guitar and this wah-wah pedal, then the houselights went up and they switched the PA off. That was my gig! But seven hours before I'd seen Spizz Energi at this thing and thought they were great. Then about a week later I was round Richard's when Mark walked in and was raving about Spizz Energi at the festival. I didn't recognise him. Then someone alerted me to the fact this guy was a Spizz Energi and said they were looking for a guitarist. Positive incest forms great bands!

Spizz: I was having sexual intercourse in the dressing room when he was playing guitar on stage!

At this suitable stage I went to buy a round, leaving my tape recorder on the table. On my light-packeted return the conversation was resumed. Transcribing later I discovered the band attempting to interview themselves, with babbling chaos the result. Safely back in my seat I asked C. P. Snare for a bit of background:

CP: I'm from Camberley. Two years ago I was in the Members, and I left them cos they're a bunch of boring old farts. They're all very old. Nicky Tesco's got rheumatism, he's that old. Then I formed a band in Reading called The Planets, but another group nicked our name, so we changed it to the Walkie-Talkies, but a group in Liverpool brought out a



**ATHLETICO, CONFIDENT OF VICTORY,
HOME OR AWAY! WEMBLEY OR THE
MARQUEE, IT'S GOALS THEY'RE AFTER!
CAPTURED AT TRAINING - CP, DAVE,
SPIZZ, JIM AND MARK (PIC: MIKE LAYE)**

record, and they were called the Walkie-Talkies. So we had to change our name again. We then became Lopez and the Waveriders and we decided to do a single and we got the backing tracks down and it wasn't going very well so we decided to split up.

ZZ: I see. Nine month's time you're gonna have to get another new group name for Spizz.

Spizz: It's still not decided yet.

Jim: It could be Spizzo Del Fuego.

ZZ: Wot?

Jim: It's Spanish for 'Isle of Fire'.

Spizz: Nostradamus predicted that the world would be consumed by fire in 1981. That was the thinking about the name Del Fuego.

ZZ: What else?

Jim: Um, Mark and me and Spizz had a part in the film "Breaking Glass", which'll be coming out in May, I think. We're in the scene where Hazel is spotted by some kind of talent scout playing in some seedy club. Mark, Spizz, myself and Gary Holton are the backing band and we all get sacked immediately after the gig for being hopeless. Spizz is playing drums.

ZZ: How will you cope if you get big, what with the single taking off and an album on the horizon and everything?

CP: It's very clinical (album-tour routine) but it's hard to get out of the vicious circle. I don't mind...

Spizz: I'd rather do six singles and one album.

Dave: If people want to see us then, as far as I'm concerned, I want to play for them.

ZZ: You're not worried that you'll be so busy playing the songs they want to hear that you won't have time to write new ones?

Dave: At the moment we can go through two weeks being a gig machine and still fit in new stuff.

Jim: A lot of people say actually that they get a bit bored with a lot of material that we perform. From our own point of view, we don't really want to play only "Amnesia" and "Kirk", we do have a lot of other material we're anxious to promote. At gigs you get the feeling a lot of people are putting up with songs they don't know until they hear the ones they do know.

Spizz: Which is why we need an album.

ZZ: What sort of crowds do you get now?

Spizz: We get a variety of audience. We just played Retford and we had a coach-load of Lincoln punks and it was great to see spike and blonde and wonderful coloured hair and leather.

CP: I know Punk is supposed to be unfashionable but I'd much prefer to see an audience of spikey hair and blue hair and leopard-skin trousers.

Spizz: I used to spit myself, back in '76.

ZZ: Who at?

Spizz: Vibrators, but you gotta with them, haven't you? I stopped spitting when I saw The Clash.

On that messy note I turned off the machine cos we were moving on. All I can say is, take notice of the Spizz crew cos their marriage of humour and originality is just what we need round here. I wager that by the time the clock gets to Spizzo Del Fuego they'll already be hot property.

Kris

...and now here's the



PIC: ANDREA MARCOU

MAIN POINTS A GAIN

LAST year was very important for music in so far as dance music was back with The Specials / Madness style of ska-influenced rock and some very important, experimental sounds emerged from bands like The Psychedelic Furs, The Pop Group and Joy Division. Main Points Again are a band who plan to link two styles together in their own very distinctive way and from what I've heard so far, they very nearly succeed. Not that ska is their choice of dance beat. For them it's their love of Northern soul music as well as the sound of bands like Public Image Ltd, Velvet Underground, Gang of Four and heavy dub music that spurs them into this strange merger that works so surprisingly well.

Main Points Again are a progression from the original Mancunian band known as Carcrash and although three members remain, it's almost like a completely new band altogether. Carcrash were a confused band desperately trying to find their own identity and direction, whereas Main Points Again are a confident bunch full of ever changing ideas which suit the mood of their music.

The band have yet to play any gigs under their new moniker, but have been experimenting with their sound and auditioning new guitarists for the past few months. They believe that they now have

the right lineup to begin life under their new name. The band have a very socialistic approach to life and it is noticeable that there is no leader, nor a frontman.

The beginnings of the end for Carcrash came when guitarist Dok left the lineup and a new manager was brought in called Debbie Langdon.

"When I was first asked to join Carcrash as a manager I knew that the image had to change a bit. All the band were so cool and pretentious on stage and there wasn't enough warmth. The band enjoy themselves on stage now and it shows," says Debbie.

Debbie's actual role in the band at the moment is very ambiguous. She handles all the regular duties that a manager would, such as gigs, but she also gets up and sings a few songs now and is learning to play keyboards as well as percussion on stage. The rest of the lineup is Dave Brennan (bass / vocals), Paul Mercieca (keyboards / guitar / vocals), Phil Mercieca (drums), Mike Hughes (sax) and Derek McGuinness (guitar). Both Mike and Derek are on a trial period and sax has only just been accepted as a new instrument within the lineup.

Dave Brennan: "We all realise that by bringing a sax player into the lineup it could end up with us having a wall of

PIC: (LEFT TO RIGHT) PAUL, DEBBIE, DEREK, PHIL, MIKE AND DAVE
PIC BY ANDREA MARCOU

sound like, say, The Extras or Psychedelic Furs, but this is something we'll have to try and avoid. Each instrument will be spaced out very loosely and we also plan to change instruments around quite a bit. I've started playing rhythm guitar on a couple of numbers now and Paul switches to bass on a couple."

Paul Mercieca: "We aren't trying to show how many instruments we can play or anything like that, nor are we being anarchic in any way. We just want to change the sound for different numbers."

Dave: "We all thought that the sax would make us sound even more like Northern soul than we are, but it seems to be going in the other direction."

The band all admit to wanting to retain the beat of Northern soul music and it is a very effective base to work from. Another important aspect of the band is the vocal interplay between Dave, Paul and Debbie. Each song is divided by the different vocal styles and there is no other band that does this kind of interplay so well, except The Mekons, who are an obvious comparison at this stage. Both try and provide warmth for the audience experimenting at the same time.

At present, the band include two cover versions with "Time is tight" and "Sock it to 'em, JB". Both songs fit snugly with the originals, but I just had to ask if they saw "Time is tight" as a token soul number. I deserved to be scorned for suggesting such a thing to this very sensitive band.

Dave: "We don't play 'Time is tight' in any form that Booker T. would have envisaged it and therefore we treat it like any other Main Points Again number. I really hate the idea of token songs because I believe you have to be totally committed to whatever you play on stage. That's why we never play a basic ska or reggae number, although we all love listening to that kind of music."

I also had to ask the band about Dok's songs. They still play five of his numbers even though he has long since left the band. Dok left when it seemed obvious that both he and the others were going in very different directions. Dave admits he never wanted a guitar band and Dok was gradually being phased out of the music due to him being a strident rhythm guitarist who took up a lot of the limelight on stage.

Paul: "We were living behind Dok's shadow for most of the time and we've often sat down and discussed scrapping all his old songs, but looking back on it all, we feel that those particular songs belong to us almost as much as they do to him. He used to come to a rehearsal with his songs, but we'd all change them and add our bits to them so they eventually became group numbers."

These include "Sometimes you love me" (which, with Debbie on vocals completely destroys the version I first heard Carcrash play with Dok singing), "Still", "The twisted mind", "Driving" and "It must be Saturday". Other songs in that set include "Taxis", "Iceland", "Young and in love" and "Dancing sideways" (all by Dave Brennan). Each has very personal lyrics and is very different in its particular mood.

Dave: "I write very personal songs from my own observations and if someone likes my material then I'm happy. I can't think of anybody who writes songs for the public and not for themselves that I like. Every songwriter that I like writes

from their own experiences and not because, say, a song about radios will be a hit because radios are currently the 'in' thing. That's too much like a job to me. Then again, if I didn't want somebody to like my songs then I might as well be writing poetry for some obscure poetry magazine."

How can she cry for the years that have gone

When everything's happy here on Radio One

And how can she cry that she has nothing to do

When she's alive and well in this suburban zoo

Her whole life centred around a quarter to six

She hears his key in the door, she has dinner to fix

She washes up her lost ideals

She cooks and cleans and makes believe

She's young and in love.

— (from "Young and in love"
— D. Brennan).

Each song in their set has its own distinctive sound. For instance, there's the pulsating bass lines and swirling Manzarell style psychedelic organ in the instrumental "Iceland", or the Gang of Four feel to "Driving" with undercurrents of reggae. "Sock it to 'em, JB" has the wry humour which goes with doing a song about James Bond (complete with the Bond themes creeping into the music) and features a completely original toast-over by Debbie.

I asked the band why they bothered to change the name from Carcrash to Main-Points-Again and was told by Debbie of the difficulties in finding promoters to put on a band with such a negative name. It seems that although the name has a very definite meaning and was not thought of out of sheer punk sensationalism, a lot of promoters took it at face value.

Dave: "Although the name meant a lot to me, we had to be logical about everything and was fed up of having to explain the name to everyone each time we played somewhere. That is why this new name has no very special meaning, whatsoever. Phil thought it up when we were watching the news on television. They say the same thing every night on each channel — 'And now here's the main points again'. We're all happy with the name anyway. We first thought up several meaningful names, but none were really very practical. I wanted us to be called 'Soul on Ice' for the obvious reasons, but it just didn't seem to click with everybody."

So the "Main Points Again" became a reality, but although Carcrash never actually recorded any vinyl, a video of the band was shown on close circuit TV around the colleges midway through last year. It seems that the Imperial College wanted a suitable video of a minor band to put on and the students making the film chose Carcrash. The band admit that they only made it for the experience, but in some ways they are also happy not to have released any vinyl too soon.

Phil: "We never really had the money to spend on putting out our own single and we had no offers from companies due to the fact that we never played that

many gigs, anyway. Even if we did have lots of money, though, I'd rather we spent it on better equipment and travelling facilities."

Dave: "We did in fact record a couple of demos and it was from that experience that I believe we could probably be far better in the studio than on stage. We aren't the greatest musicians around, but I'm sure we could produce an album which would be full of good diverse music. The Sits are a good example of a band which aren't technically brilliant but they made a great debut album."

So what does the band have in store for the future?

Dave: "We feel that by changing all the time we can remain fresh and produce some interesting dance music which might take the audience a while to get into, but that is our particular sound and we want to keep to it. We don't want to just copy Northern Soul music because it would be like Wilson Pickett's backing band without Wilson Pickett. Our music involves a lot of different influences and it's a lot more flexible than it ever was before. I like to think that we can be as unpredictable and interesting as a lot of the Jamaican dub soums are on record. We all know that it won't be easy. Our music doesn't fit into any particular category, but we wouldn't want it to, anyway."

Alan Anger

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KILLING JOKE

MY FIRST sojourn into the pages of this fine mag and what a ballsup. Cock up amundo, mate. This was supposed to be the definitive article on one of the finer outfits to make it to the Swinging "Atomic" 'Eighties, that's Killing Joke to you. Yes, Killing Joke have already made an impact on many people's brains with their fine debut "Turn To Red" EP, and more folk will be able to savour the fine talents of this unit in the *Zigzag* 100th issue party where the boys will be performing.

So yeah, here I am supposedly about to give a highly detailed account of the group's history and instead you shall be getting an excerpt from an interview with one on the people involved in the group's management who also go under the quaint banner of Malicious Damage, the person being Brian Taylor.

So you think you're being short changed, huh? Well, listen bud, for starters one of the band have gone for a short break, so when he returns I'll get together a biography that would make Pete Frame piss his pants, deal!

Okay, bear with me, for the uninitiated, Killing Joke have been their present form for about four months. They feature Jazz Coleman (keyboards / vocals), "Pig" Youth (bass / vocals), Paul (drums) and Georgie (guitar).

They all originate from the south side of London with the exception of Georgie who, as you couldn't guess, comes from Newcastle.

They are sharp and savage at the same time. They have a similar vocal attack of The Stranglers in their better days and sometimes sound like the funky heavy metal PiL. Live they are invigorating visually and musically.

Brian Taylor is one of a team who handles the band's affairs at a quaint little "bombsite" somewhere in Holland Park. He is positive, succinct, sceptical and so far has saved the group from falling foul of the record company stranglehold. He is an ex-university student but definitely not a bath chair philosopher.

Killing Joke have a new single out now on Rough Trade — a double A-side, "Wardance" / "Psyche", which is a definite progression on their excellent debut.

Pig Youth (who once got a lot of publicity as being a Sid Vicious lookalike), also plays with Jimmy Lydon's 4be2, and is a much-in-demand bassist (just think we might have new wave session men in the future).

This as I said before is a brief chat with Taylor, it might give you a hint of what Killing Joke are all about. It starts off obscurely with a chat about beatniks, poets and their connections with PiL music.

ZZ: It's interesting how you relate to Lydon as an 'eighties beat poet.

BT: Well he's nicked a couple of things from that era, like I'm sure somebody else wrote "No Bird Can Sing".

ZZ: Do you think he's aware of that?

BT: I don't know. I mean it's an interesting coincidence, he's got a mesmerising mind, even though he has discernable influences. He doesn't necessarily pick them up, they just keep on coming out. At certain points I think he is just basically into noise, but there is a purpose, I don't know where he strings it all together. The "Careering" song is brilliant because it means so many different things and it's as though he has snatched them all out of the air and rammed them into some sort of mixing machine that's produced this song about what people do in their lives and about what's going on in Ireland, it's living.

ZZ: How do you see Killing Joke in comparison to PiL, 'cause they're both quite spontaneous in similar respects?

BT: Lyrically, yeah there is an automatic sense to the writing.

ZZ: Do you go out and see a lot of bands?

BT: I haven't gone out to see so many since I started doing this.

ZZ: Were you into punk when it was living?

BT: Yes, but I wasn't in London at the time, I suppose I wasn't into it initially, but I got into it having read a lot about it in the papers.

ZZ: Are Killing Joke still into punk?

BT: Well I don't think punk ever died. I think it's just a way of naming something. It's like the way "Hippie" was derived, you just fit people in a category. The band are basically into the tenance

of punk which was anarchy. They love disrupting anything that is set and criticising conventional attitudes — you'll always have punks as sceptics in a way. The music is spontaneous, it has all the energy of punk, it's also got a lot of close control. They know absolutely what they are doing. For me Killing Joke have grown organically out of punk, they have got everything that punk promised but record companies never gave an opportunity to come to fruition. I think bands like that and there are a lot of them growing up, like Bauhaus, I really think they have grown out of something and are creating a new sound, they are just going to sweep Mod away. There will be probably only a few bands left from the mod revival thing.

ZZ: The Specials?

BT: I don't know about The Specials, I think The Beat have tremendous potential. I think bands like Madness will just go.

ZZ: There's always cabaret . . .

BT: Yeah they might become the Barron Knights of the future.

ZZ: Do you think Killing Joke will become a part of any movement?

BT: I'd like to think that could happen, they already have a big following for a band who has only been going round for a few months. We put an item in the papers giving free tickets for The Venue show. Normally, say at the Music Machine, you'd get only 20 per cent maximum turning up, but we had a really good night 'cause so many people turned up, almost too many . . .

The single has arrived on my desk. Neat cover with Fred Astaire dancing in a nuclear wasteland, it also has a prescription leaflet inside. It's all happening and hopefully you'll meet the band in the next issue, but in the meantime purchase the platter, you'll be doing yourself a favour (I mean it's on Rough Trade and you can dance to it, only joking).

Are you receiving?

Pete Makowski

**MORE NEXT MONTH
(I SHOULD HOPE!)**





THE ONLY ONES make success stab, but...

ANOTHER year, another interview: same living room. The Only Ones have a new album, "Baby's Got a Gun", and I'm waiting in Peter Perrett's basement flat to hear why it's going to achieve all the things the last one didn't. This time the band, with not inconsiderable pressure from their record company, have gone all out for Commercial Success. When I spoke to guitarist John Perry last year, he thought it unlikely that CBS would let them back in the studio without an independent producer. He was right. The man picked for the job was Colin Thurston, who's worked with the Buzzcocks and Joy Division, and is, according to Peter Perrett, "a nice guy." But Thurston seems to have been regarded more as a necessary evil than anything else:

"The majority of the band wanted us to do it ourselves", insists Peter Perrett, and admits to being not the easiest person to work with. "I find it personally difficult to succumb to a producer. The very fact that someone else was making decisions about what we were doing, it was like being back at school with the producer as school teacher. That's why I was late or playing truant most of the time."

Despite this hint of a slightly unco-

operative attitude, Thurston and the Only Ones have between them achieved a simplified, more immediately accessible sound on "Baby's Got a Gun". It's the kind of sound you can imagine being played on daytime radio — the ultimate aim. Previously Only Ones singles have had virtually no airplay, although "Trouble in the World" did capture quite a few votes on Capitol Radio's "People's Choice".

Has the music lost anything in being directed at a wider audience?

"On the first two albums we had so much going on all the time; that's all right if you're going to sit down and listen to something, but on the radio you've got to appeal to people immediately. I think that Colin's got a sound that may be more suited to radio. If we'd done it ourselves, it might have been 10 times better, it might have been 10 times worse. I think the album's good the way it is — better than the first two albums."

"Baby's Got a Gun" should at least be the most contemporary album the band has released. Both "Even Serpents Shine" and "The Only Ones" included

tracks written five or six years previously. There is still a back catalogue of unrecorded songs which John Perry suggested might see the light of day on the third album. It didn't happen that way, and Peter Perrett is anxious to point it out: "There are no old songs on this album, they're all from the last year. A week before we went into the studio the tracks were going to be completely different to the ones we recorded; like "Baby's Got a Gun", that's why the album's called "Baby's Got a Gun". Then, during the first week in the studio I wrote six new songs — "Castle Built on Sand", "Happy Pilgrim", "Deadly Nightshade", "Strange Mouth" . . . I don't suppose we'll be able to do "Baby's Got a Gun" now, it'd look a bit silly." Kris points out that the Doors managed it with "Waiting For the Sun", so maybe we'll get to hear the usurped title track on another album of a different title).

Although one Alan Mair song ("My Way Out of Here") is included on the album, it is, as usual dominated by Peter Perrett compositions. Which tend, as usual, towards the oppressive. He claims to have made a conscious effort to stop writing depressing lyrics, but songs like "Deadly Nightshade" — "Can't you see,

PIX: TOM SHEEHAN

THE HAPPY PILGRIM?

the whole world's crumbling under me — don't exactly lift the spirits. And as an ultimate morale booster, there's a bouncy little number called "Why Don't You Kill Yourself?"

"Well, that's quite a friendly song, you know", muses Peter Perrett (with friends like that . . .). But on further questioning he reveals that the song really does have its inspiration in real-life tragedy / drama: "I just don't enjoy people phoning up and saying they've taken an overdose. That girl had her stomach pumped out four times in one week."

Manager Zena Kakoulli says that sad people just seem to get attached to Peter, and produces a long letter from a (male) fan to prove it. Starting off normally enough with all the customary compliments of a fan letter, it ends up with the poor chap confessing that he'd tried to commit suicide with "I love Peter Perrett" written on his leg. The band apparently get enough letters of this sort to make them seriously consider the wisdom of releasing "Why Don't You Kill Yourself" at all.

In contrast to all this intensity, Peter Perrett has joined forces with Penetration's Pauline to produce a single of touching banality called "Fools". It is an old Country & Western ballad, originally a hit for Helen Cornelius and Jim Ed Brown (sounds like they should be in the Waltons). Where did they find this gem?

"When we were in America we heard it on the radio and everyone liked it a lot — so we decided to do it. But I don't think it still sounds C & W now." He has a point there; Peter and Pauline's peculiarly English accents replace the American Country twang, making the finished product — well, interesting. A sort of unwholesome Donny and Marie.

While Peter Perrett was recording romantic duets, Alan Mair was producing Scottish band, Another Pretty Face. All this creative activity and they still found time to record an album.

"It was difficult getting us all there at the same time. It took a lot longer in the studio than the others — six weeks. We weren't getting on particularly well."

Shockhorror — Only Ones Split?

"We all hate each other", he grins and adds reassuringly, "I suppose that's normal in groups. Specially when you've been off the road for a long time. When you're not playing, you've got all the business side of things to cope with, the struggle to get things the way you want them. But when you're touring, you just go out in front of an audience — and that's the greatest feeling there is."

And he means that most sincerely. The

band's recent Lyceum gig was a triumph, first and foremost because so many people turned up. Peter rose to the occasion, looking like a tortured soul one minute and an impish schoolboy the next. A full British tour is planned this spring; what next?

"We'll probably have to go to America

again. Then maybe start on Australia, Japan — that's if we get let into Japan."

Not planning to do a Paul McCartney, are you? "Well, I've got about four or five convictions, but Japan's a really important market now. What we need now is a bit of success and everyone would be happy."

He's right of course. Everyone would be happy — the band themselves, the record company, the fan-who's-followed-them-from-the-start. You can only keep a band together for so long without the sort of recognition you know you deserve. Peter Perrett intends to get it: "Four years ago I'd have given anything to be in the position I'm in now, making albums and having a following. But to keep going, to do the things you want to do, you've got to have money, you've got to be financially solvent."

Well, yes, he may have a point there, and I'm willing to bet "Baby's Got a Gun" will be the album to make the Only Ones "financially solvent". A marketable commodity. I just hope they don't have to lose their spark of originality — which gives them rarity value in these unoriginal times — in the process.

Sarah Lewis



CRISIS!

NOBODY "killed" punk rock but bands like the UK Subs and the Angelic Upstarts committed GBH on its already battered frame with enough ferocity to (temporarily) beat it into a state of mindless ineffectuality. It still lurches on stupidly, castrated, lobotomised and worthless, endlessly playing out its pathetic parody of Black Sabbath OD'ing on speed.

Nobody needs any more shoddy, third-hand HM anthems to tell them how hard they are and how terribly, terribly frightened of them Mumsie and Daddy should be. Nobody needs "New Punk" (sic).

The only things Crisis have in common with the previously mentioned abortions are short hair and Doctor Martens. Their starting point is the basic ingredients of the first Clash album — rock 'n' roll, reggae and politics. The politics of life (maaaaaaan). Crisis are real.

"We want homes, homes for all. We don't want Southwark's town hall." Their first EP, "No Town Hall", came out on Community Action Group Records early last year. Neither the title track nor the two stage favourites backing it ("PC 1984" and "Holocaust") suffered from over exposure on the radio. The EP didn't quite put the band into tax exile status but it had more bottle than any other 45 of '79. It radiates pure anger — anger at bureaucracy, anger at the police, anger at the Nazis, anger at society.

At the time of its release, the group's lineup was founder members Tony Wakefield (bass) and Doug Pearce (rhythm guitar), with Lester Jones on lead and Insect Robin on drums. They were fronted by an 18-year-old headcase called Phrazer and described their aim as the promotion of socialist ideas. Previous work experience had included the Right to Work march and several RAR & ANL benefits.

A Peel session was secured and from it came the second single "UK 79". Both musically and lyrically, it showed positive progression from the violent punk thrash of NTH. They had developed a stronger feel for reggae rhythms and a heavier veneer of cynicism.

"Black and white achieve the same. You never get picked on if you've got a funny name. And you never get beat-up on a tube train. In the UK". So true. It was also the vinyl debut of the vocalist Dexter.

I've seen Crisis twice since Dexter joined. The first time they blew The Ruts off the stage and The Flies off the face of the earth. A large percentage of the Guildford audience had only come to see the local heroes and they persisted in calling them back on throughout the other sets, almost reducing Malcolm Owen to tears with their playful antics.

The second time I saw them, was at the Wooden Bridge last night — 25 February 1980 — and this time it was Dexter who was on the verge of crying. The rockabilly roadcrew were incapable of stopping the trouble that was obviously gonna stem from the few "brothers" who weren't hiding their swastikas behind anything.

Crisis opened with the unrecorded "Gar-

bage" and everyone seemed in a jovial enough mood. The rebel drummer only got a few cries of "Rock 'n' roll wanker" flying over his flat-top and they cheerfully introduced themselves as "Dexter's early morning before breakfast joggers."

No gobbing either. Things are looking good. "Holocaust" is the second number, sporting Wakefield's best bass line to date and some heartening singalong. "What's On TV" is followed by "USSR" — a song to alienate any Bolshy fascists. There are no communists in the Kremlin and Crisis know it. "UK 79" gets a superb reading, as does the B side "White Youth". Punk rock as white roots music and a call for solidarity against overwhelming odds. "We are black. We are white. Together we are dynamite."

From then on the songs run together. Frenzied, pogoing, spontaneous skinhead fighting and brilliant versions of "SPG" and "PC 1984" (with a light show no less).

"Afraid" is introduced as a short break, as Dexter gives his throat a rest. Suddenly, everything stops. The lights go on. Some kid is clutching his head and there's blood all over his t-shirt. Someone else (one of the "lads" from the other bar?) is brandishing a mike stand. Dexter shouts "Stop". Nobody moves. Then the bloke with the stand (I think) is on the floor, with twenty pairs of DMs kicking shit out of him. Dexter shouts something else and the boot boys pull away. The body on the floor isn't moving. Two roadies carry him out.

"You're all just f---ing cowards" Dexter sneers.

"We're gonna play this song again — cos it's about what you are — afraid. We're never gonna play Guildford again. You've let me down, you wankers. You're just cowards. You're nothing. I could take the lot of you."

Some skins / big blokes make their way to the front of the stage and play at looking hard.

Appropriately, "Frustration" is the last number. Half way through, Dexter leaps off the stage and lays into someone. Or maybe he just jumps behind the bar. No-one really knows what's really happening. The kid with the bleeding head is about to confront someone else. A roadie steps between them. The band go off.

People begin to trickle away, spitting blood.

If Crisis never play Guildford again no-one can blame them. At the moment, they are the best band still doing the pubs 'n' clubs and they deserve a lot better than they got on Monday.

Their set is now the strongest it has ever been, with the weaker, Crass-like old numbers like "Search and Destroy" and "Kill Kill Kill" having been replaced by some subtler, more rhythmic new stuff with the same punch and commitment.

Contained in their fifteen numbers is the raw material of the Last Great Punk Debut Album. The odds against them ever cutting it become smaller with every gig.

Mark Daplin

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Starring Ray Gange and The Clash

132 mins. Cert X

THANKS to shock horror cries from our puritan gutter press, hard-hitting if unsubtle promotion, plus the various well-aided legal wrangles, "Rude Boy" is released to a guaranteed audience. I found the film depressing, muddled and full of redundant fourth form symbolism. By trying to say too much, it inevitably says too little, and with a running time of over two hours, is lengthy to the point of self-indulgence.

That said, sporadically it can be moving, amusing, ironic and even exhilarating. The exhilaration stems mainly from The Clash music and footage, which is comprehensive compilation of live, studio and rehearsal shots coupled with back stage, hotel and On The Road scenes that also feature Clash crew Johnny Green and Barry Baker.

"Rude Boy", however, was never intended to be "a Clash movie". In that it succeeds entirely.

The central character is one Ray Gange, 20-year-old, unemployed and with a Brixton upbringing that has oddly left him with an ideological vacuum that is fair prey to all and sundry. His tendencies, sadly, are fascist.

Ray, through his own misunderstanding of their attitudes, is drawn towards The Clash, and eventually blags a job as a roadie. Almost inevitably, he rejects the band's political stance (never fully examined in the film) and finally their hospitality.

As a secondary theme to these activities, "Rude Boy" contains a bunch of news-re type clips of police, NF and SWP confrontations interspersed with dole queue shots, Thatcher campaigning and black youths "dipping" in Stockwell's rush hour. Just about as subtle as it sounds, and the continual fragmented imagery invokes not sympathy or empathy but eventual apathy to the director's intentions, which remain ambiguous to the last.

Rather like a pale tribute to "One Plus One", the film lurches from one confused issue to another, focusing hazily on what are undoubtedly important dilemmas, but failing to provoke any positive response.

The music (in Dolby stereo), is immaculate, nourishing the movie with its only true reality (the rest is a wanky, wet liberal interpretation of same) and two highspots are Joe alone at the piano, and Mick laying the vocals on "Staying Free". You also get to hear "Complete Control", "White Man", "White Riot", "Tommy Gun", "Police and Thieves" and "The Prisoner", to name but a few, and that can't be bad.

Overall, "Rude Boy" is depressing, not because it attempts to examine issues that can't be "perused", but because it presents a series of cluttered images that eventually say nothing. It poses no tangible questions, and provides even fewer answers. So no explanations, but then, who knows what the Rude Boy knows?

Robin Banks



PIC: PENNIE SMITH

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JOE ELY

two bouncers come rushing past, a wriggling Ely between them. He's thrown into the street like this was a saloon.

Just as I'm trying to tell the bouncer who he's just ejected, there's a mighty CRASH!! and a familiar cowboy boot comes high-kicking through the glass door. Attached to it is a raging Joe Ely.

We dive out and grab him before more doors get the treatment and Old Bill arrives. Joe's for doing the whole street but we each grab an arm and shepherd him 'round the corner and out of sight. A near miss with a travel agents and we finally get the hot-blooded texan to sit on the curb. Must've looked a real sight, three pissheads sitting in a row holding each other up as the cabs shot by.

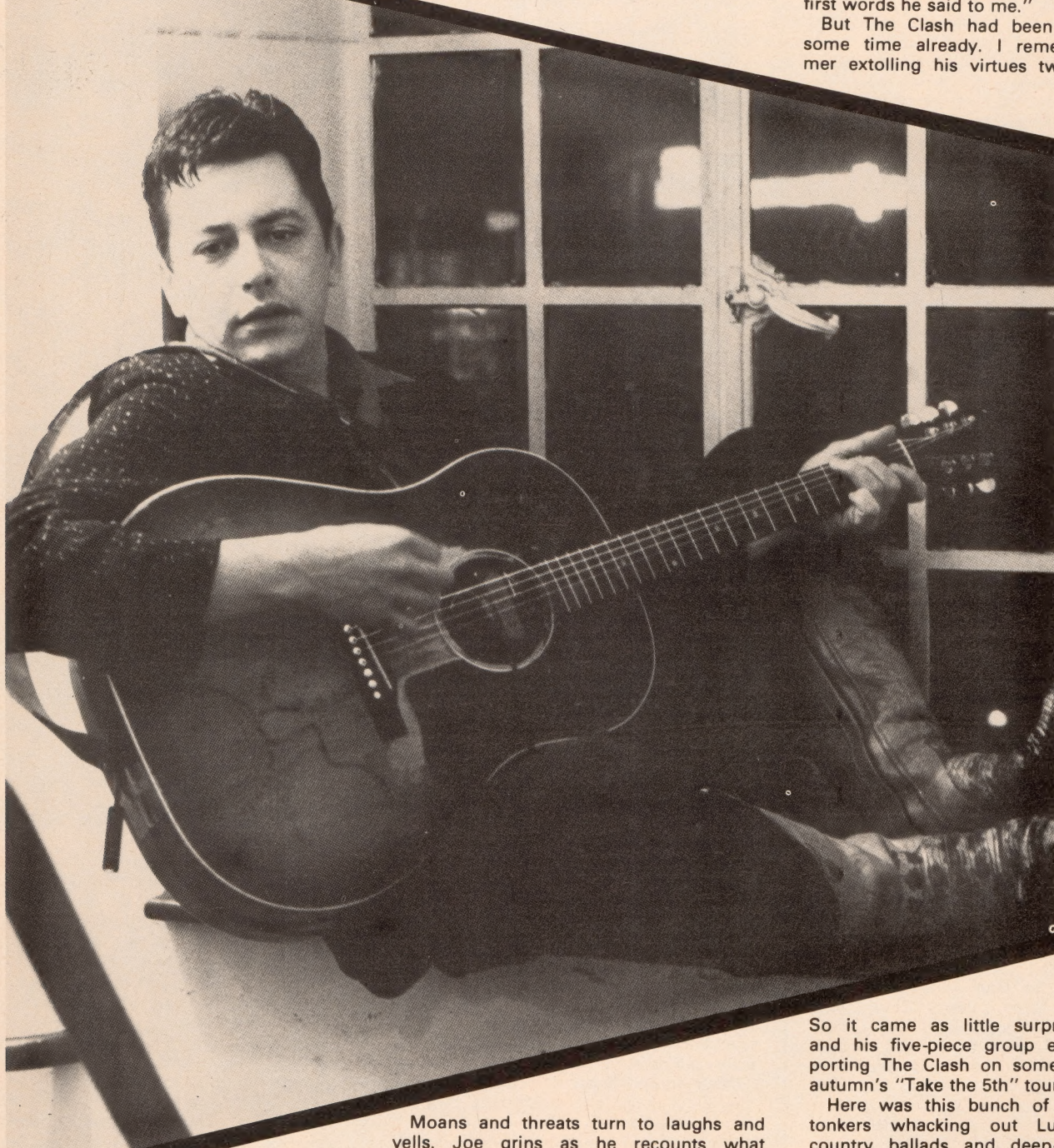
and pick up where the post-gig celebrations left off earlier. At the tack-for-tourists Sherlock Holmes hotel in (where else?) Baker Street the party stretches noisily into the night, with Irish bagpipe music courtesy of Planxty (who asked them?) the soundtrack . . .

He's been here before, when he played the Wembley Country Music Festival (and hated it) and a reputedly killer set at The Venue last May, when members of The Clash could be spied in the crowd.

After that gig the two groups met and something sparked.

"Joe Strummer came up after the gig and asked where he could get a shirt like mine," explained Ely. "They were the first words he said to me."

But The Clash had been Ely fans for some time already. I remember Strummer extolling his virtues two years ago.



PIC: CHARLIE VILLERAS

SITTING on a curb with a fuming Joe Ely . . .

Chrissie an' me have just saved a whole street from trashed windows. Only casualties were The Venue door and Joe Ely's pride. Well, he had just been chucked out of his own gig!

I couldn't believe my eyes. Standing in The Venue foyer, still bathed in the great feeling an Ely gig can bring. Suddenly

Moans and threats turn to laughs and yells. Joe grins as he recounts what happened.

"See, me 'n' Butch (Hancock, Ely's long-time sidekick and singer in his own right) found the fire escape in the place, so we climbed up on the roof to look at the view. Ah was shouting, 'Just look at them lights! London!' Then these guys told us to come down, so we did, but ah said 'you ain't gonna catch me!' and went back up the ladder. That's when they grabbed me and threw me out!"

A few more minutes and Joe's cooled down enough to go back to the hotel

So it came as little surprise when Ely and his five-piece group ended up supporting The Clash on some dates of last autumn's "Take the 5th" tour.

Here was this bunch of Texan honky-tonkers whacking out Lubbock swing, country ballads and deep-fried rock 'n' roll to hard-core American spikeheads waiting for a White Riot. And he was getting over.

It appealed to Ely's barrier smashing instincts to support London's premiere prime movers. It appealed to The Clash's spirit of adventure and homage to open for Ely at a tiny redneck club in return at Lubbock, birthplace of himself and Buddy Holly.

The bond was sealed and as The Clash planned a new album it was agreed that Ely would fly in to do some of the dates

on the UK tour to follow.

Well, do I remember staggering into the Electric Ballroom on a Friday night. Heat hit my face and beat bit my ears. The Ely band were in full swing, charging through "Cornbread Moon" with a dazzling mixture of dynamic precision and raw power. There was this geezer on the left playing a bleedin' accordion, beard and glasses like a grey Rolf Harris. Meanwhile stage right big Jesse Taylor picked some of the meanest blistering solos those walls could ever have heard.

Ely threw back his head and scraped his guitar, a smile as broad as a Lubbock cottonfield periodically breaking apart his face. One moment intense like a Strummer, oozing sensitivity and emotion the next, always heartfelt.

So he's been touted as a new figurehead but Ely himself is never happier than when he's on a stage. He really doesn't care about the trimmings. He wants to roam and play, like always.

I saw Ely a total of five times on the visit, plus his "Rock Goes To College" TV spot, where the soundmen must have had underpants stuffed in their ears.

At the two Clash gigs I saw he didn't fail to win over a large chunk of crowd although, of course, he got jeers or apathy from the good old bondage-brains who'd also can Mikey Dread. How confused they must've been when Joe got up with The Clash to whack out his own "Fingernails" and several of their songs too, and what a weird sight — The Clash, Joe Ely and Mikey Dread all up there blazing on "London's Burning".

Joe was due too to play Hanley, Bristol, Derby and Mile End (2) with The Clash but Topper hurt his thumb and the gigs were blown. Joe and the boys (both gangs) were bitterly disappointed, 'specially as they wanted to record a couple of the gigs for a projected live album.

So a couple of Ely gigs were quickly slotted in — one word-of-mouth at the Hope 'n' Anchor, another two days later at Dingwalls.

The Hope 'n' Anchor was buzzing that night.

"This is the funkiest place we've played for years," exclaimed genial Jesse Taylor.

"It's certainly the SMALLEST!" said Joe Ely, casting an eye at the faithful orange box size stage which was set up for eight people.

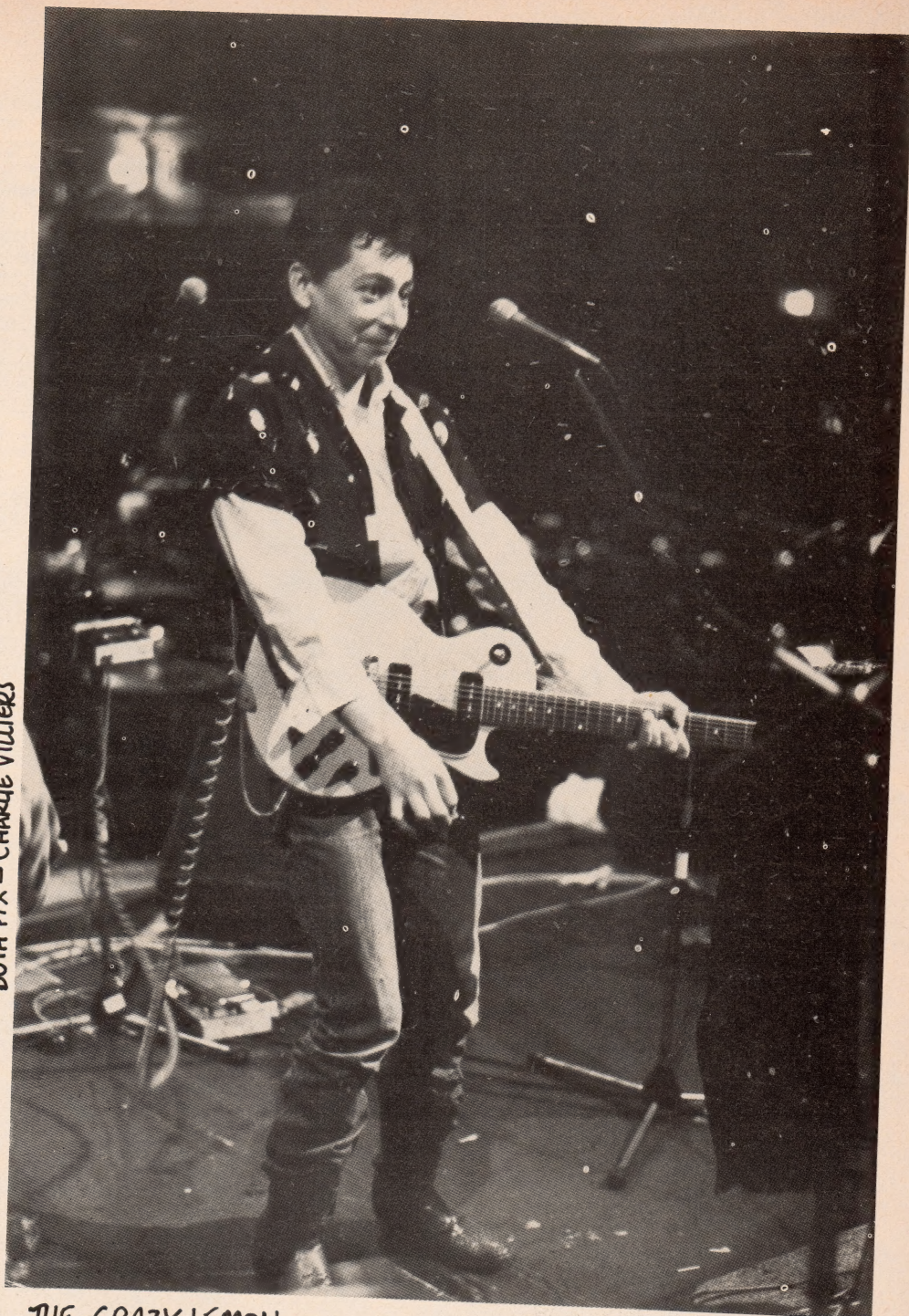
Tonight would see Joe Strummer, Mick Jones and Blockhead-Clash keyboardist Mickey Gallagher up there too.

A stirring announcement by Jock Scott heralded Ely's two sets, which covered a gamut of his three MCA albums. "Suckin' A Big Bottle Of Gin", "Johnny Blues" from "Joe Ely"; "Cornbread Moon", "Boxcars", "Jericho", "I'll Be Your Fool" and "West Texas Waltz" from "Honky Tonk Masquerade", and "Fools Fall In Love", "Standing In A Big Hotel" and "Down On The Drag" from the one of the same name, the latest. There were also as-yet-unrecorded goodies like "Dallas From A DC-9" and "I've Got A Roadhog On My Mind".

It was great to see Ely in a place so small and steamy. Everyone danced and I think our moose noises probably drowned the band on the tape!

Towards the end it was getting hotter by the second and up got the Clash-men. A slowie first then straight into a rock-hard chug which must've gained momentum for five minutes before the crowded stage finally burst into the familiar refrain — "I keep my fingernails long so they click when I play the piano". It was lethal.

BOTH PIX — CHARLIE VILLIERS



THE CRAZY LEMON

The Strummer Joe next for "Jimmy Jazz", which I admit to having doubts over when I first heard "London Calling". Now it's among me five fave tracks, sneaks on ya that one! The Ely band give it a loose walking treatment, with added flavour from Ponti Bone's accordion and Lloyd Marnes' singing steel (he made the tour half-way through having been tied up in Texas with a gospel project — but he ain't leaving or nothing).

Much longer than The Clash version, Joe S. scatting and ad-libbing. Nobody ain't smiling by now.

That was the one they ran over in the soundcheck. Now it was down to basics, what we all know. Joe launches into a hoarse "Be-Bop-a-lula". They go off on that one, but Strummer's whispering in ears. Back on.

"Here's one from my home-town," announces Ely Joe, and leads a surging "Peggy Sue".

A night to remember even though I recall very little.

Dingwalls was another scorcher, Clash-less cos they were Paris-bound, but a scorcher nonetheless. By now the band

had firmly found their feet, and after a short set by Butch Hancock (who'd somehow found out about the Zigzag wholesalers' bash going on at Tower Hill and turned up to eat the largest plate of food, and drink wine!), fair burned. The influences to be found in Ely's music are legion, which is part of the reason he's so important. It ain't just country music, it's Lubbock calling — a devastating mixture of Spanish-Mexican, Texas swing, straight country, blues, rockabilly and raunch. No way will Ely be bound by that redneck straitjacket which demands Nashville schmaltz and soft steel. He's a law to himself, a thorn in the side of tradition, and could turn Country Music upside down. 'Bout time.

When we met to talk at the Sherlock, Ely was rather razzled from the night before. He drawled and deliberated from beneath a hangover and made great sense.

I started by asking how he was enjoying the trip (this was before The Clash dates were pulled out). The reply is slow, croaked but definite.

JE: Well . . . I have to say that I'm enjoying the shit out of it. I didn't come over with any expectations. I knew that we'd be playing to strange crowds.

I didn't know what to expect or anything. We've never done a tour like over here, but the stuff we did together in Texas and California somehow seemed to work. I don't know why it *shouldn't* work, but it somehow seemed to. Maybe it's like . . . *people's* music or something. We were talking the other night at the Electric Ballroom about how strange it was. Of course it's a whole different crowd but we kept seeing connections between it and a honky tonk on Saturday night in Texas. That didn't happen in LA or Phoenix or Minnesota, but there's something in London and Texas that feels real close together. I still haven't been able to put my finger on what it is. It's like everybody's letting it all go and that's the way it is in Texas on a hot sort of night. Everybody puts up with the shit all week and come Saturday night goes completely crazy and carves up the joint.

ZZ: How did you 'n' The Clash hitch up?

JE: We played a gig in California with 'em and they came to Austin, Houston and Dallas, then I talked them into doing a gig in Lubbock. The place that we were going to play in, the old Cotton Club, we couldn't get for this night so we had to do another club over by the college. During that time we talked about doing something over here. They were already talking about calling the album "London Calling" so we kinda joked about it. They said "You oughtta call yours 'Lubbock Calling'!"

ZZ: How did they go down with the Lubbock locals?

JE: People didn't know what was going on! Everybody was terrified. It was like *terror*, y'know? They'd never seen anything like it. They couldn't react . . . I mean towards the end everybody was going berserk but at first it was "Good God, where did this band come from?" "Nobody had heard of The Clash. They were playing a gig here, y'know."

I feel like there's some kind of weird connection that's taken place without either one of us knowing about it. It was something I felt had to be followed-through with. Something, somewhere down the road happened at the same time between us. You couldn't even call it a coincidence, it was something out there, some kind of communication without us even talking.

ZZ: Well, you're breaking down barriers in Country Music while The Clash are doing the same here for rock 'n' roll.

JE: Yeah, something like that. I grew up listening to it and they grew up listening to all kinds of rock 'n' roll, but boiled it down and threw it over their shoulder, did their own stuff. That's all you've got to work on really, what's in your reservoir, whatever's been poured into you then you got to pour it back out and throw away what you don't want and keep what you do. So obviously something happened that way and maybe we didn't get the right telephone number calling back and forth . . . but finally we got the connection.

ZZ: You introduced your fans in Texas to The Clash, now you've done it here, but they must've wondered what was going on.

JE: I know it! See, I was a little concerned about it at first but then I thought, "it's all music", and if it's good it ought to be heard. However, I almost expected to come over and be kicked off the stage every night, but it's been real good. I realise we're playing to their

crowd and they've never heard our songs before, but I don't think it's so much in the songs but in the *spirit* of the songs. They're dealing with human beings. What you're up against, Texas version.

ZZ: Do you get stick when you play Texas for not doing standard country stuff?

JE: We draw a pretty rowdy crew when we play in Texas. We don't really draw the straight C'n'W crowd over there. We draw farm kids run away from home! Tractor drivers on their way to doing a big dope deal! A pretty mangy crowd. The whole straight C'n'W thing, what comes out of Nashville, has always been beyond me anyway. The top 40 that's going on on country stations over there really depresses me. "Coward Of The County" . . . I was sick of that the first time I heard it!

When I think of the country thing I think of rhythm 'n' blues and Texas music and stuff, as opposed to the coasts. Texas is almost like a dirt coast. Texas is right there 1,500 miles from LA, 2,000 miles from New York, and it's almost like a little island that still has a lot of roots, a lot of balls to it. Austin would blow you anyway, there's so much music going on there.

ZZ: Are you on your own breaking down these barriers?

JE: We're a kind of underground band in Texas. We're known by a certain crowd but we're not well known. I think there's people coming around who are gonna break outside of it: Terry Allen, the Maines Brothers . . . at one time the whole Texas thing was led by Jerry Jeff, Willy Nelson and Waylon Jennings and I kinda missed out on that whole thing cos I was travelling while they were knocking Austin down. They were conflicting with Nashville, which was good.

ZZ: What's Lubbock like?

JE: It's all cotton. Cotton City USA. The whole town is flat, no hills. You can see 30 miles in every direction.

ZZ: Is everybody expected to go and work in the cotton mills when they leave school?

JE: No, the whole thing's got pretty mechanised. My parents had a used



clothes store down town. My father worked for a moving van line, then the railroad. We were always moving around. I was playing music when I was eight years old, but never really got into guitar until I was about eleven. They always wanted me to play violin but I couldn't get along with that. I got an old flat-top guitar, drilled it full of holes and stuffed it full of wires. I got a little band together when I was at junior high school. By the time I got to high school I couldn't stand school so I just quit every chance I got. I quit and come back . . . I finally just took off and headed for California, hitchhiked, jumped freights, lived the old romantic life.

ZZ: So the songs are from personal experience rather than mere romantic fantasy. "Boxcars" . . .

JE: Yeah, that was written by Butch, who I grew up with. It hit so close to home I had to do it. Me, Butch and Jimmy Gilmore are the main three writers who've been on all the albums. We played together in a band at one time, cut a few acoustic songs at Nashville. Then I got itchy to do something else and took off again. I'm always running back into Butch and Jimmy but we're all doing different things.

ZZ: Buddy Holly is Lubbock's claim to fame, isn't he?

JE: Yeah. Lubbock has never really recognised it much. They did a memorial plaque about a year ago when that movie came out. They put a little wooden memorial plaque down by this park and called it Buddy Holly Recreation Area. First night they put it up somebody lifted it!

ZZ: I would've.

JE: Yeah, me too! After The Clash gig we went to an after-hours bar on the other side of town. They wanted to see that roller rink where Holly used to play. It's just this old broken down building with the windows boarded up, and they were kind of disappointed with that. Then I took 'em down to the Buddy Holly Recreation Area and they said, "Is this all there is? Where's the Buddy Holly Avenue?" Ain't no such thing. In the end we went to his grave and had a party. We were all dancing around, completely drunk, and they left plectrums and two pences on the grave.

ZZ: Elvis Presley played the Cotton Club, didn't he?

JE: Yeah, he used to play there a lot. In fact when Holly first started he opened for Elvis at the Cotton Club about '55 or '54. There's still some old timers around Lubbock who saw that gig and the story goes that Elvis signed some girl's panties right on the crotch. Her boyfriend was in there and went and stuck a rag down the gas tank of his pink cadillac and burned it in the parking lot outside the Cotton Club!

ZZ: Were you happy with the last album (Bob Johnston produced and the result was a slightly slicker affair than the two predecessors)?

JE: Well, I haven't been happy with any of them. I want to produce the next one myself. I liked working with Chip Young on the first two. Johnston was a mad-man, we got along really good, but I'm still not happy with the sound yet.. I really wanna try and do the next one myself, whatever it takes.

I just heard that Joe's live album'll be rush-released any day now (whoopie!), and I wouldn't be at all surprised to see Strummer and Jones pop up in the sleeve credits of the next studio offering (whoopie again!).

Kris Needs

- 1 Revolution Rock — Clash (CBS)
- 2 You — Au Pairs (021)
- 3 Girl On The Phone — Jam (Polydor)
- 4 Being Boiled — Human League (Fast)
- 5 Noise Noise Noise — Damned (Chiswick)
- 6 Lava — B-52s (Island)
- 7 Where's Captain Kirk
- 8 White Mice — Mo-dettes (R. Trade)
- 9 Ha Ha! Funny Polis EP (Groucho Marxist)
- 10 Doesn't Make It Alright — Specials (2-Tone)
- 11 Mind Your Own Business — Delta 5 (R. Trade)
- 12 Richmond — Pinpoint (Albion)
- 13 South Of The River — Blast Furnace (Nighthawk)
- 14 Johnny Won't Get To Heaven — Killjoys (Sire)
- 15 Let's Talk About Girls — Undertones (Sire)
- 16 Johnny Was — SLF (R. Trade)
- 17 Sister Europe — Psychedelic Furs (CBS)
- 18 You Can Be You — Honeydew (Crass)
- 19 Spanish Bombs — Clash (CBS)
- 20 Naturals Not In It — Gang of 4 (EMI)

— Kim Igoo, Stanwell, Middx.

- 1 Overkill — Motorhead (Bronze)
- 2 Fanatical Fascists — Gary Moore
- 3 Born To Kill — Damned (Stiff)
- 4 Bodies — Sex Pistols (Virgin)
- 5 Bye Bye Johnny — Chuck Berry
- 6 Suburban Relapse — Siouxsie (Polydor)
- 7 Troops Of Tomorrow — Vibrators (CBS)
- 8 Hiroshima — Ultravox! (Island)
- 9 I'm An Upstart — Upstarts10 Breakdown — Buzzcocks (New Hormones)
- 11 Reuters — Wire (Harvest)
- 12 High School Confidential — Jerry Lee Lewis
- 13 Melody Lee — Damned
- 14 Transmission-Joy Div. (Factory)
- 15 Children Of The Grave — Sabbath (Vertigo)
- 16 Clampdown — Clash (CBS)
- 17 Domino — Cramps (Illegal)
- 18 Soldier Of Fortune — Thin Lizzy (Phonogram)
- 19 Smokin' My Ganja — Capital Letters (Greensleeves)
- 20 Gerald — Lurkers (BB)

— Pete Golding, Kidbrooke, London SE3.

- HEWY'S
- 1 I Ain't Thick It
 - 2 Graveyard —
 - 3 Exhibition —
 - 4 Kicks — UK S
 - 5 Girl On The R
 - 6 Horrorshow —
 - 7 Belsen Was A
 - 8 Love And Ro
 - 9 My Boy Lollip
 - 10 Dope For Gun
 - 11 Beautiful Pict
 - 12 (Xntrix)
 - 13 One Of The La
 - 14 Memories — P
 - 15 Shotgun Solut
 - 16 (WEA)
 - 17 First Street R
 - 18 gin)
 - 19 Burn — Frenzy
 - 20 Solid Gold Eas
 - 18 Contamination
 - 19 Magic River —
 - 20 Great Big Kis
 - (Real)

— Hewy, Su
brough

- 1 TV — Flying Lizzards (Virgin)
- 2 Tell That Girl To Shut Up — Holly & The Italians (Oval)
- 3 We Are All Prostitutes — Pop Group (R. Trade)
- 4 Bursts Of Old Flames — Brills (Barclay Towers)
- 5 Oh No It's You — Passions (Real)
- 6 Riot Squad — Vice Versa (Neutron)
- 7 Gabrielle — Nips (Soho)
- 8 Maniac — Johnny Moped (Chiswick)
- 9 White Mice — Mo-dettes (RT)
- 10 Transmission — Joy Div. (Factory)
- 11 Back To Nature — Fad Gadget
- 12 Silent Command — Cabaret Voltaire (RT)
- 13 Shake Some Action — Flamin' Groovies (Sire)
- 14 Full Moon In My Pocket — Swell Maps (RT)
- 15 One By One — Ruefrefx (Good Vibrations)
- 16 Monochrome Set — Monochrome Set (RT)
- 17 Rock Lobster — B-52s (Island)
- 18 What Goes On — Velvets '69 (Mercury)
- 19 We Love You — Psychedelic Furs (CBS)
- 20 You — Au Pairs (021)
- 21 Worzel's Song — Worzel Gummidge (Mangel)

— Philip Townsley, Rotherham

- 1 Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues — Bob Dylan (CBS)
- 2 Dream Baby Dream — Suicide (Ze)
- 3 Bafflin' Smoke Signal — Lee Perry (Black Art)
- 4 King Midas In Reverse — Hollies (Parlophone)
- 5 Rudi Can't Fail — Clash (CBS)
- 6 Holy Cow — Lee Dorsey (Stateside)
- 7 Off The Wall — Michael Jackson (Epic)
- 8 Memories — PiL (Virgin)
- 9 Past Present And Future — Shangri-Las (Red Bird)
- 10 Woke Up — Meditations (Double D)
- 11 White Mice — Mo-dettes
- 12 Ruby Baby — Dion (CBS)
- 13 Life During Wartime — T. Heads (Sire)
- 14 I Fought The Law — Bobby Fuller 4 (London)
- 15 Song From The Floorboards — Magazine (Virgin)
- 16 You Can't Judge A Book . . . — Bo Diddley (Pye)
- 17 Poor And Clean — Gregory Isaccs (African Museum)
- 18 Walking In The Footsteps Of A Fool — Ben E. King (London)
- 19 Have You Seen Her? — Chi-Lites (MCA)
- 20 Chinese Rocks — Heartbreakers (Track)

— Graham Melia, Blackburn, Lancs.

- 1 16 For Ever —
- 2 take)
- 3 My Daddy Driv
- 4 (Illegal)
- 5 Rock 'n' Radio -
- 6 Blacks / Radio -
- 7 Keep Your Dr
- 8 Star)
- 9 Badlands — Br
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- 11 (Oval)
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- 14 Treasures (Ph
- 15 Calling Your
- 16 (Zoom)
- 17 Night Out —
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- 19 (B70)
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- 1 (Cameo)
- 2 Come On Le
- 3 Hearts Of S
- 4 (Epic)
- 5 Personality,
- 6 cury)
- 7 Electricity —
- 8 Kerry Pleas
- 9 While I'm
- 10 (RAK)
- 11 Bright Eyes

— Lindsay

YOUR TO